Notes on the Dutch East Indies

Read the following notes.

Reorganise them with headings, colours, tables etc, to make them your own.

Go to the textbook and to The WIStorian and add notes to the various sections

At the end, using 5 bullet points for each section, make a table to comment on the social, economic, political and cultural effects of Dutch Imperialism on the Dutch East Indies.

Sources:

Cowie pp66-70

Hall pp 789 to 793

**VOC and Early Dutch Rule**

-profitable

-trade in spices

-Initially did not intend to rule, instead persuaded local rulers to cooperate for commissions

-setbacks to Dutch in trading ventures convinced them to set up a stable administration to support their enterprises: the VOC (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie) or the United (Dutch) East India Company

-VOC had own military to control ports and towns and support local, cooperative sultans

-Dutch control extended across nearly all of Indonesia

**The Culture (or Cultivation) System (approx. 1830 to 1870)**

-administrators were indigenous nobles

-peasants were forced to give their time and labour, as a percentage, to the cultivation of commercial crops, sugar, coffee, indigo and spices for Dutch profit. Also, some cochineal.

-the peasants also had to work on roads, bridges and public works

-harsh system

-but profitable for Holland, who paid off the national debt and built national railways

-in the end, one third of Dutch revenue came from the Dutch East Indies

-regents and village chiefs in charge of enforcement of the system (Hannigan 135)

-villagers exempt from paying rent but had to give up 1/5 of crop for export at cheap prices

-presented as a way for farmers to make profits, but crops sold at cheap prices so this did not happen (136)

-often forced labour happened instead of forced cultivation

-corrupt local governance often meant villagers paid taxes too (137)

-Dutch officials and managers and local regents and headmen pushed for higher yields for more profits….affecting locals lifestyle

-incidental benefits: eg skilled machinists for plants, bridges and roads built for transport of crops…if it had been all bad rebellion would have happened? (137)

**The “Free Enterprise System” or Liberal Policy (approx. 1870 to 1900)**

-late in the nineteenth century the world saw a change from closed empire trade practices under government control to free enterprise governed by laissez-faire principles

-the VOC had to change from seizing products to encouraging production by private enterprises

-Agarian Law of 1870 allowed individuals and companies to lease land for plantations

-created freedom for entrepreneurs to exploit indigenous people

-more plantations forced locals to give up independent farms and become landless wage earners

-traditional ways of life were destroyed as the system changed from subsistence farming to European style capital investment and cash currency instead of bartering

The “Ethical Policy” (1901-1930s…)

-at the start of the twentieth century Dutch people were starting to criticize imperial rule in the Dutch East Indies, as even though some changes had occurred for the better, the system was still exploitative

-In 1899, a Liberal politician, van Deventer, said the Dutch had a “debt of honour” and should repay the Indies for revenue taken since the “batig saldo” (surplus balance policy) of 1867. Caused a stir (Hall)

-in 1901, Dutch PM Dr Abraham Kuyper said the Dutch needed to “adopt a policy of moral responsibility for native welfare” and launched the Ethical Policy (Hall)

-socialist influences and a new sense of conscience in the Dutch pushed for improved living standards for the people of the Dutch East Indies

-Ist socialists in Dutch govt saying “ government of the Indies for the Indies” suggesting eventual self-government (Hall)

-the Ethical Policy meant that some profits were ploughed back into the Dutch East Indies for education, economic and welfare services

-seen as a “moral duty” to care for subjects, but results were modest

-by 1939 only 5 per cent of locals were literate

-Dutch trained small numbers of indigenous population for technical and administrative positions, but not enough for self-government to be a possibility

-decentralisation became the watchword from The Hague to Batavia, from Europen officials to Indonesian officials and was started in 1903 but in reality not much changed before 1914 (Hall).

- in trying to promote decentralization towns and villages were to look after their own issues but often the Dutch ended up setting up village schools or running health care instead of teaching locals the skills to do it themselves. The Indonesians resented this and nationalism was promoted as a result (Hall).

**Indonesian Nationalism in response to Dutch Imperialism**

-by the beginning of the twentieth century there was not even an accepted name for the Dutch East Indies people, they were still Javanese or Sumatrans or Balinese

-not helped by the fact the archipelago had 6000 islands spread over 5500 kilometres.

-the only sense of unification came from being under Dutch Rule. There was no involvement in education, shipping, banking, marketing or commercial production

-90 % of the population was Muslim, but this wasn’t a national unifier as it focused on Mecca, not locally

-the local officials trained under the Ethical Policy were responsible for first stirrings of nationalism

-Some young Javanese went to Europe to study and learnt about the principles of the American Declaration of Independence and the French Revolution, saw how parliamentary democracies worked and that some British colonies were being given autonomy or independence

-in addition, the Japanese had beaten the Russians in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 and modernized to avoid imperial control

-Local nationalism affected by Boxer Rebellion of 1900, Filipino Revolt against Spain in 1898, and rise of Japan (who in 1899 was given equal rights to Europeans in Indonesia) (Hall 789….)

-these factors caused stirrings of nationalism

-the emphasis on the principle of “self-determination” at the Versailles Conference in 1919 also spurred them on.

-some Dutch in the Netherlands wanted to promote nationalism, as a result of socialism becoming more popular in Europe and the Ethical policy ideology.

Dutch Resistance to Reforms:

-when locals tried to form pro-independence associations, the Dutch enforced regulations to prevent political meetings and associations

Indonesian Nationalist groups:

-1900 Raden Adjeng Kartini- a regent’s daughter started advocating for education of girls.

-1908, Dr Waidin Sudera Usada founded first cultural/nationalist movement Budi Utomo.

-some less political organisations did emerge, like Budi Utomo (pure endeavor) in 1908. It was a cultural organization promoting pride in Javanese indigenous customs.

-attracted mainly intellectuals and Javanese officials

-aimed to organise a national school system inspired by Indian poet Tagore, and a little by Gandhi

-Sarekat Islam (Union of Believers) was more influential, was founded in 1911/ 1912, and was a Muslim organization. It moved into politics by trying to restrict Chinese merchants and push for Indonesian self-government

-it promoted Javanese batik traders

-its 4 original aims were:

1. promotion of Indonesian enterprise

2. mutual economic support

3. intellectual and material well being of Indonesians

4. Islam (which was the bond across Indonesia)

-had 2 million members by 1925

-its 1916 National Congres demanded self-government, constitutionally attained, with the Dutch

-after the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1917, the Indonesians, reasoning that capitalism had caused their problems, saw Marxist socialism as the remedy. The PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia: Indonesian Communist Party) was formed.

-A Moscow connected group called Section B, tried to assume control of the Communist drive but the PKI became more important

-Between 1900 and 1939, the Dutch government showed little inclination to grant self-government. The governor-general, who was instructed from Holland, ruled through regional agents without any form of parliament.